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C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 001244

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SA, SA/INS, S/CT, PRM; NSC FOR E. MILLARD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07-16-13

TAGS: PREL PTER PGOV PREF MV CE

SUBJECT: Action request concerning Maldivian national accused of Islamic extremist activities

Refs: (A) 02 Colombo 2329; (B) 02 Colombo 1113

(U) Classified by Donald A. Camp, Charge d'Affaires.
Reasons 1.5 (b, d).

¶1. (U) This is an Action Request -- Please see
Para Four.

¶2. (C) Mission has received information that a Maldivian national who was convicted of anti-Maldivian government (GoRM) activities last year is in Sri Lanka. This individual, Ibrahim Luthfee, was convicted along with two other Maldivian nationals of subversion in July 2002 and sentenced to 25 years imprisonment (see Reftels). In explaining the long sentences, the Maldivian government had told us that the three were extremists bent on overthrowing President Gayoom's government and replacing it with an Islamic state. In terms of specifics, the three men had reportedly worked together in a business in Malaysia and were involved with a website that carried anti-GoRM information. After the GoRM determined that the men were engaged in anti-government activities, the three were arrested upon their return from Malaysia and tried. (Note: Last year, Mission had looked at the website, which is called "Sandhaanu, and it carried some anti-U.S. and pro-Al-Qaeda content. The website is still in operation, though there had been some reports that the Maldivian authorities had managed to close it down.)

¶3. (C) According to several sources, Lufthee was brought to Colombo in late May for medical treatment and managed to escape from Maldivian police custody. Mission was contacted by a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) protection officer on July 15 who confirmed that Luthfee was in Sri Lanka. The UNCHR officer stated that Luthfee's case was under review to determine possible refugee status. Pending the outcome of this review, UNHCR planned to contact Mission to ascertain possible resettlement in the U.S.

¶4. (C) ACTION REQUEST: Mission requests information on whether this individual is of interest from a counterterrorism standpoint. Further, Mission requests guidance on how to respond to any inquiries regarding potential resettlement in the U.S. from UNHCR. END
ACTION REQUEST.

¶5. (U) Minimize considered.

CAMP